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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1229
INFO OAU COLLECTIVE
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
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AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000693

SIPDIS

NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER

CAPE TOWN FOR A/S KANSTEINER

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SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE'S PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT DEEPLY FLAWED
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REF: (A) HARARE 566, (B) HARARE 577, (C) HARARE 592, D) HARARE 611, E) HARARE 620

CLASSIFIED BY DCM WHITEHEAD, REASON: 1.5 (B,D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME, THE PERIOD PRECEDING ZIMBABWE'S MARCH 9-10 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION HAS BEEN DEEPLY FLAWED. THE GOZ'S OPAQUE AND UNEVEN IMPLEMENTATION OF ELECTORAL PROCEDURES GIVES MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE TO THE RULING ZANU-PF, BY MINIMIZING VOTER TURNOUT IN AREAS OF OPPOSITION STRENGTH AND COMPLICATING OBSERVER EFFORTS. THE MERGER OF GOZ AND ZANU-PF STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS, FROM DIRECT LOGISTICAL SUPPORT, TO CLEARLY BIASED MEDIA CAMPAIGN COVERAGE, TO A SUBVERTED LEGAL REGIME, HAS PROVIDED ADDITIONAL UNFAIR ADVANTAGE TO THE RULING PARTY.

2. (C) SUMMARY CONTINUED: FINALLY, CONTINUING VIOLENCE AND WIDESPREAD INTIMIDATION AND HARASSMENT OF OPPOSITION LEADERS AND SUPPORTERS BY ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS, AS WELL AS POLICE AND SOLDIERS, HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY HAMPERED THE OPPOSITION'S CAMPAIGN EFFORTS. THE MDC COULD STILL EMERGE VICTORIOUS DESPITE THE SIGNIFICANTLY UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD, BUT OVERCOMING ALL OF THE OBSTACLES PLACED IN ITS WAY WILL REQUIRE A VERY LARGE VOTER TURNOUT. END SUMMARY.

MINIMIZING OPPOSITION VOTER TURNOUT

3. (C) GOZ INTIMIDATION AND LOGISTICAL MANIPULATION WILL MINIMIZE
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TURNOUT IN URBAN AREAS, THE STRONGHOLD OF THE MDC. THE GOZ HAS ENGAGED IN A COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN TO DISENFRANCHISE, EITHER EXPLICITLY OR LOGISTICALLY, GREAT NUMBERS OF POTENTIAL OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS.

4. (C) INTIMIDATION EFFORTS BY GOZ/ZANU-PF:
-- SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE COUPLED WITH THE PROPAGATION OF THE IDEA THAT ZANU-PF CAN AND WILL TRACK DOWN THOSE WHO VOTE FOR THE MDC, BY SUCH MEANS AS HIDDEN CAMERAS AND TRACKING THROUGH THE BALLOT SERIAL NUMBER.

-- HARASSMENT AT ROADBLOCKS AND IN NEIGHBORHOODS, DESIGNED TO SHOW THE EXTENDED REACH OF WAR VETERANS AND YOUTH MILITIA.

-- MILITIA SEIZURE OF NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS FROM SUSPECTED MDC SYMPATHIZERS, DEPRIVING THEM OF SUFFRAGE.

-- PROPAGATION OF THE IDEA THAT ZIMBABWE WILL EXPERIENCE CIVIL WAR SHOULD THE MDC WIN. THE RECENT ZDF LEADER'S STATEMENT THAT THE DEFENSE FORCES WOULD ONLY ACCEPT AN INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE

VETERAN AS PRESIDENT WAS A KEY PART OF THE STRATEGY.

-- HARASSMENT OF PRIVATE MEDIA, INCLUDING THE FIREBOMBING OF THE INDEPENDENT "DAILY NEWS" AND THE ARREST OF ITS EDITOR, DESIGNED TO SQUELCH COVERAGE CRITICAL OF PRESIDENT MUGABE OR ZANU-PF.

-- THE MURDER OF 31 MDC SUPPORTERS SINCE JANUARY 1, OUTLINING THE POTENTIAL THREAT TO MDC SUPPORTERS OF VOICING THAT SUPPORT.

-- IMMUNITY FROM ARREST AND PROSECUTION FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT THE VIOLENCE FURTHER SUBSTANTIATES THAT WAR VETERANS AND YOUTH
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MILITIA HAVE BEEN GIVEN FREE REIN.

15. (C) MANIPULATION OF VOTING LOGISTICS:

-- THE SUPREME COURT AFFIRMED LAST WEEK THAT ZIMBABWEANS CAN ONLY VOTE IN THEIR HOME CONSTITUENCIES. CIVIL SOCIETY AND OPPOSITION MONITORS AND OBSERVERS WILL BE FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN OBSERVING TO HELP MINIMIZE POSSIBLE VOTE FRAUD, AND STAYING IN THEIR HOME DISTRICT TO VOTE THEMSELVES.

-- MANY OF THE 80,000 CIVIL SERVANTS ASSIGNED DUTIES AS POLLING OFFICERS WILL BE ASSIGNED OUTSIDE THEIR CONSTITUENCIES AND THUS UNABLE TO VOTE.

-- POLICE AND SOLDIERS ARE ALLOWED TO USE ABSENTEE BALLOTS, BUT REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO FILL OUT BALLOTS IN THE PRESENCE OF THEIR COMMANDING OFFICERS, WHO ARE PREDOMINANTLY SYMPATHETIC TO THE RULING PARTY.

-- THE NUMBER OF POLLING STATIONS IN URBAN AREAS (MDC STRONGHOLDS) DECREASED BY APPROXIMATELY HALF IN COMPARISON TO THE 2000 ELECTION. LINES AT THESE STATIONS WILL BE CORRESPONDINGLY LONGER, POSSIBLY DISENFRANCHISING MANY.

-- IN RURAL AREAS, WHERE ZANU-PF SUPPORT IS STRONGEST, THE NUMBERS HAVE GREATLY INCREASED.

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-- THE HARARE MAYORAL, MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND THE CHITUNGWIZE MAYORAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WILL ALL BE HELD MARCH 9-10, FURTHER COMPLICATING THE PROCESS.

-- THE REGISTRAR GENERAL HAS DISTRIBUTED A SUPPLEMENTAL LIST TO ALL POLLING STATIONS OF SUSPECTED DUAL NATIONALS WHO HAVE NOT RENOUNCED FOREIGN CITIZENSHIP. MANY OF THESE ALLEGED DUAL NATIONALS ARE OF EUROPEAN OR ASIAN DESCENT, AND ARE CONSIDERED TO BE STRONG MDC SUPPORTERS.

COMPLICATING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

16. (C) IN A WELL-ORGANIZED EFFORT THAT WE BELIEVE DELIBERATE, THE GOZ HAS PROVIDED OPAQUE, OUTDATED, OR MISLEADING INFORMATION --

WHEN THEY PROVIDED ANY INFORMATION AT ALL -- TO OPPOSITION PARTY MEMBERS. GOZ ATTEMPTS TO MANIPULATE THE OBSERVER PROCESS IS DEFINED IN DETAIL REF E.

17. (C) INFORMATION CONTROL:

-- AS LATE AS MARCH 7, LESS THAN 48 HOURS BEFORE THE ELECTION, THE MDC STILL DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE UPDATED VOTERS ROLL. THE COPY PROVIDED TO THE MDC WAS THE LIST AS OF JANUARY 27. ONLY ZANU-PF HAS A COPY OF THE FINAL VOTERS' ROLL.

-- THE LIST OF POLLING STATIONS' LOCATIONS WAS NOT PUBLISHED UNTIL MARCH 7.

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18. (C) VOTER ROLL MANIPULATION:

-- THE GOZ NOTED IN THE GAZETTE THAT THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IN THE MARCH 9-10 ELECTION WAS JANUARY 27.

-- ON MARCH 6, THE REGISTRAR GENERAL RETROACTIVELY EXTENDED THE VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE TO MARCH 3.

-- ZANU-PF, THEREFORE, HAS BEEN REGISTERING THOUSANDS OF SUPPORTERS SINCE JANUARY 27.

USING STATE STRUCTURES FOR POLITICAL GAIN

19. (C) THE GOZ, THROUGH OVERT COOPERATION WITH ZANU-PF STRUCTURES AND ABUSE OF AN AUTHORITARIAN LEGAL REGIME, SEEKS TO KEEP THE OPPOSITION OFF-BALANCE IN ITS CAMPAIGN EFFORTS. THE GOZ WORKS ON BEHALF OF ZANU-PF IN THREE WAYS. FIRST, THE GOZ ALLOWS ZANU-PF TO USE GOZ INFRASTRUCTURE IN CONDUCTING ITS ACTIVITY. SECOND, STATE-SPONSORED MEDIA HAS BEEN EXTREMELY ONE-SIDED IN ITS COVERAGE OF THE ELECTION, INCLUDING PROVIDING LENGTHY AND LURID COVERAGE OF AN ALLEGED ASSASSINATION PLOT. THIRD, THE GOZ HAS CREATED AN AUTHORITARIAN LEGAL ENVIRONMENT, WHICH LIMITS MDC REDRESS.

10. (C) USE OF GOZ ASSETS:

-- WE HAVE REGULARLY OBSERVED GOZ OFFICES AND VEHICLES USED BY ZANU-PF FOR ELECTION ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING ARMY JEEPS, PARASTATAL COMPANY BUSES, AND MUNICIPAL

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DUMPTRUCKS.

-- ZANU-PF IN SOME PLACES IS DISTRIBUTING THE GRAIN MARKETING BOARD'S MAIZE MEAL. THOSE WITHOUT ZANU-PF PARTY CARDS ARE NOT ABLE TO PURCHASE FOOD IN MANY AREAS.

-- ZDF OR POLICE OFTEN COMBINE WITH ZANU-PF YOUTH MILITIA TO CONDUCT VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION.

-- A LARGE NUMBER OF YOUTH MILITIA TERROR CAMPS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AT SCHOOLS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT PROPERTIES, BOTH FOR TRAINING AND AS A SECURE LOCATION FOR ABDUCTIONS AND BEATINGS.

-- GOZ ARMS CHARGED WITH ELECTION ACTIVITIES ARE THEMSELVES HIGHLY PARTISAN. THE ESC IS HEADED BY A RETIRED COLONEL AND HIS DEPUTY IS A BRIGADIER WHO WENT ON LEAVE TWO MONTHS AGO.

11. (C) BIASED MEDIA:

-- DAILY NEWS BROADCASTS PROPAGATE THE STORY THAT THE MDC IS A PUPPET OF WESTERN STATES.

-- STATE MEDIA CLAIM THAT THE FOOD SHORTAGE IS A RESULT OF FOOD-HOARDING BY WHITE FARMERS, IGNORING THE FACT THAT ONE OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF THE CURRENT FOOD SHORTAGE HAS BEEN THE DRASTIC

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REDUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION FOLLOWING THE STATE-SANCTIONED LAND GRABS.

-- STATE MEDIA HAVE BEEN IN A FRENZY OVER EVENTS SURROUNDING TSVANGIRAI'S ALLEGED ATTEMPT TO HIRE ARI BEN-MENASHE OF DICKENS &

SIPDIS
MADSON TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENT MUGABE.

12. (C) ABUSE OF THE LEGAL APPARATUS:

-- THE POLICE REGULARLY HAVE CITED THE PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY ACT (POSA) AS AUTHORITY TO CANCEL PUBLIC EVENTS SCHEDULED BY THE OPPOSITION MDC, INCLUDING CAMPAIGN RALLIES, AS WELL AS TWO BRIEFINGS OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY THIS WEEK (REFS A, B, C).

-- PRESIDENT MUGABE HAS USED EXTENSIVE PRESIDENTIAL POWERS TO OVERRULE SUPREME COURT DECISIONS ON IMPORTANT ELECTION ISSUES. (I.E., THE COURT'S JANUARY DECISION THAT HOLDING THE HARARE MAYORAL, MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY WAS ILLEGAL; AND THE COURT'S FEBRUARY 27 DECISION THAT PARLIAMENT ILLEGALLY PROMULGATED THE AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL ACT).

-- THE GOZ HAS ERODED THE INDEPENDENCE OF ITS JUDICIARY, TO LIMIT THE OPPOSITION'S OPTIONS FOR REDRESS TO OPPRESSIVE STATE ACTION.

-- THROUGH HARASSMENT OF JUSTICES AND APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL PRO-MUGABE JURISTS TO THE SUPREME COURT, MUGABE AND THE GOZ HAVE REMOVED AN IMPORTANT CHECK ON GOZ AND ZANU-PF ACTION.

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-- A NUMBER OF ELECTION-RELATED MDC APPLICATIONS TO THE COURT HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL, INCLUDING MDC CHALLENGES OF THE CONTINUING VOTER REGISTRATION AND DEMANDING IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THE FINAL VOTER'S ROLL.

CONCLUSION

13. (C) REGARDLESS OF THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THESE ELECTIONS, THE PROCESS HAS BEEN TAINTED SUCH THAT A FREE AND FAIR POLL CANNOT BE ACHIEVED. THE ZANU-PF GOALS IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD WERE FOCUSED ON SUPPRESSING MDC VOTER TURNOUT TO THE EXTENT THAT ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS WOULD INDEED OUTNUMBER THEM ON THE POLLING DAYS. DURING THE 2000 ELECTIONS, ZANU-PF MILITIA CONDUCTED A CAMPAIGN OF INTIMIDATION DURING THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD, FOLLOWED BY A RELATIVELY PEACEFUL POLL. THE GOZ THEN TRUMPETED REPORTS FROM SHORT-TERM ELECTION-DAY OBSERVERS THAT THE PROCESS WAS CLEAN. WE BELIEVE THAT THE GOZ AND ZANU-PF ARE FOLLOWING THAT SAME SCRIPT IN THIS ELECTION.

14. (C) SHOULD THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORATE TURN OUT AT AN EXTREMELY HIGH LEVEL, THE MDC COULD STILL POSSIBLY WIN THE ELECTION. RESULTS, PARTICULARLY FROM THE URBAN MDC STRONGHOLDS, SHOULD BE AVAILABLE BY TUESDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 12. DELAYS BEYOND THAT TIME WOULD BE A WORRYING DEVELOPMENT THAT WE BELIEVE COULD INDICATE A GOZ ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE THE COUNT.

15. (C) POST BELIEVES THAT THE OPERATIONAL POINTS DESCRIBED ABOVE ARE FAR TOO WIDESPREAD AND ORGANIZED TO BE SPONTANEOUS EXPRESSIONS OF ZANU-PF SUPPORT, AS THE GOZ CLAIMS. THESE YOUTH MILITIAS, SUPPORTED BY STATE SECURITY FORCES, HAVE INSTILLED A
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PALPABLE KAFKA-ESQUE FEAR IN MANY RURAL COMMUNITIES. GIVEN THE CHANGES TO THE LEGAL STRUCTURES, WE FIND IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THE MDC WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL SHOULD IT SEEK RECOURSE IN THE SUPREME COURT TO OVERTURN A TAINTED OR STOLEN ELECTION.

THIS REPORT WAS COMPILED BY TDY REPORTING OFFICERS TROY FITRELL
AND AARON TARVER.

SULLIVAN

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